

Wisconsin's Fish & Wildlife ANNUAL REPORT 2002-2003



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Greetings,

From the first fish I caught as a child to my work as a hunter safety instructor, I've seen and felt the satisfaction of connecting with our natural resources. I know many of you feel the same, and that's why the Department of Natural Resources is working hard to maintain the programs you value: Managing fish and wildlife species, monitoring their health, and providing the quality habitat they need.

The hunting and fishing license dollars you pay are the lifeblood of these programs. This report shows how we invested your dollars in natural resources over the past year. Your continuing support is more vital than ever as the DNR, like all state agencies, reduces spending to close gaps in the state's budget.

To sustain the outdoor experiences you value while addressing state budget needs, Governor Jim Doyle worked with conservation groups from all over Wisconsin on a widely supported plan that recognized the need for modest increases in conservation license fees to maintain important programs. In the final budget, however, the legislature failed to approve the license fee increases needed to adequately fund programs such as pheasant rearing and fish stocking, and instead imposed even deeper cuts in services needed to support Wisconsin's natural resources.

The Department and the Governor are hearing your concerns about the effects of the legislature's cuts. It is now more important than ever that the legislature approve the recommendation of the Governor and conservation groups from across Wisconsin to protect the viability of programs in place now.

Thanks to your support over the years, Wisconsin has been able to create and maintain quality hunting and fishing experiences. Turkeys reintroduced to a small corner of Wisconsin a mere 28 years ago now provide hunting throughout much of the state. Wisconsin ranks among the top five fishing destinations. In 2003, we acquired public access to more than 45,000 acres of land, with a large part of that open to hunting and fishing. We also are making progress to address chronic wasting disease in our deer herd. I was pleased to see the number of deer hunters rebound in 2003, showing that we've been able to provide you the information you need to make informed decisions about hunting and venison quality. An independent review of our statewide CWD program for white-tailed deer also found that our management efforts were appropriate, given current understanding of the issue.

Every natural resource success grows from our partnership with you and your support of our mission. I'm proud to serve you, and I hope this report shows how we put your commitment to work.

Wisconsin's Fish & Wildlife Annual Report 2002-2003

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Cover Photo: Sharp Tailed Grouse
by Robert Queen, DNR





Overview

Revenues from license sales and stamps are key to conservation efforts in Wisconsin. This money combined with federal excise taxes makes up the Fish and Wildlife Account, the chief source of funding for the fish and wildlife conservation programs that are important to you. State and federal authorities audit this account regularly. The account is part of a larger Conservation Fund that includes funds from a variety of sources.

The Fish and Wildlife Account pays for habitat protection, fish and wildlife species management and research, land and facilities management and conservation law enforcement. This account also pays for services that support these conservation functions, including customer service and licensing, public information and education, computer-based technology services, human resources support, financial administration and regional management.

Total FY03 spending: In fiscal year 2003 (FY03), the department spent \$95.4 million on activities that support hunting and fishing in Wisconsin. The department spent \$6.6 million more this year than last year (FY02 total was \$88.8 million) for two main reasons: To manage chronic wasting disease in the state's deer herd, and to cover the costs of negotiated pay adjustments granted to represented state employees.

Other Funding Sources

The \$95.4 million spent in FY03 represents 20.9% of the total funds DNR spends on all programs. Other funding sources that support conservation efforts include:

Forestry funds: Support management of 452,331 acres for habitat, camping, hiking, hunting and fishing.

Parks funds: Provide habitat, fishing and hunting programs as well as educational

programs about fish and wildlife and outdoor skills.

Endangered Resources funds: Support habitat management for fish and wildlife on about 56,000 acres of state natural areas, many of which offer fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Boating, All-terrain Vehicle and Snowmobile funds: Provide programs and enforce laws that ensure public safety in the outdoors. These funds also are used to maintain trails, bridges, boat landings and piers that give anglers and hunters access to fishing and hunting.

General tax revenue and bonding (such as the Stewardship Program): Acquire land for fish and wildlife habitat to provide for public hunting, fishing and wildlife observation.

Wetland Protection Funds: Provide good habitat for fish and wildlife by protecting wetlands.

Nonpoint Funds: Improve water quality by controlling erosion and runoff that harm fish and wildlife habitat.

Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine: is provided as part of Conservation Patron License benefits; it is also available by subscription to the general public. It provides timely, accurate information to hunters, anglers and other people interested in the state's natural resources.

How 2003-05 state budget affected FY03 spending

This report covers FY03 expenditures, but these are best understood in the context of the 2003-05 state biennial budget. Governor Jim Doyle's proposed 2003-05 budget directed all state agencies to reduce spending to close gaps in Wisconsin's overall budget.

Proposed budget At the DNR, the proposed budget included reductions in Fish and Wildlife Account-funded programs totaling \$7.8 million dollars and 30 positions over the two-year budget period. These reductions affect each area covered in this report.

At the same time, Gov. Doyle recognized the value of maintaining hunting and fishing opportunities for all. He recommended modest increases in hunting and fishing license fees to help support current natural resource programs. The department had recommended fee increases, and the hunting and fishing community strongly supported them.

The Governor's proposed budget also increased to \$1.0 million over the biennium the amount of tribal gaming revenues transferred to the Fish and Wildlife Account.

After reviewing the Governor's proposed budget, the legislature eliminated a proposed \$12 fee increase for resident gun deer and archer licenses, and reduced a \$6 increase to resident fishing licenses to \$3.

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) estimated that the legislature's changes would reduce revenues to the Fish and Wildlife Account, when compared to the Governor's proposal, by over \$11 million during the two-year budget period. The LFB estimated the legislative version of the fee package would generate additional revenues of \$4,614,000 in FY04 and \$7,006,400 in FY05 to the Fish and Wildlife Account compared to previous fees.

Final budget In the final budget the legislature increased some fees but not others, approved the Governor's reductions in spending and imposed even deeper cuts by eliminating an additional \$1.5 million in Fish and Wildlife Account expenditures used for administration and technology tasks and positions that support fish and wildlife activities.

At the time the final state budget was passed in July, 2003, the department was extremely concerned about the LFB's projected revenue reductions and the uncertainty of Fall 2003 deer license sales due to public concerns about CWD. DNR projected as much as a \$6.0 million deficit in the Fish and Wildlife Account by June 30, 2005.

Because the Department is responsible for managing expenditures from the account to assure that these do not exceed available revenues, the primary programs that spend from this account -- Fisheries, Wildlife and Enforcement -- each began planning for as much as an additional \$1.0 million annual reduction in their operations.

Current Projections Many variables can affect the Fish and Wildlife Account's fiscal health. The good news is that deer license sales definitely rebounded in Fall 2003. While not returning to 2001, pre-CWD levels, resident deer gun sales increased about 6% and resident archery licenses rose 15% over 2002.

Given the higher revenues associated with these sales increases, in January 2004 the DNR revised its projected revenue shortfall for the rest of the 2003-05 biennium. The shortfall now totals less than half the \$6.0 million dollars projected six months earlier, but the department still has to manage this remaining projected deficit through June, 2005.

How to deal with the future?

During the rest of the 2003-05 biennium, the department will:

- Use updated revenue, expenditure and projected deficit figures to evaluate proposals that prevent a 2005 deficit in the Fish and Wildlife Account.
- Develop a license fee increase package for the 2005-07 budget, based on a new approach of requesting smaller, more frequent increases as needed rather than wait longer to address rising costs. As part of that process we will work with external partners to discuss the need for resources that support critical programs.

Actions in response to budget cuts

In the meantime, here are actions we have taken to reduce operations costs and carry out the 2003-05 budget cuts:

Fisheries:

- 27 technician and biologist positions will remain unfilled to save money
- A statewide musky monitoring project has been cut
- Langlade fish hatchery will be closed
- 25%-50% of budget for aquatic education and outreach has been cut
- Fisheries' warmwater habitat improvements are reduced
- Musky and walleye fingerling production has been cut
- Brook and brown trout stocking on the Great Lakes has been cut

Wildlife:

- Wildlife population surveys will be cut back
- Habitat maintenance and improvement projects will be cut
- Nature and education programs will be cut 50%
- Funding for wildlife nuisance complaints will end

- Many public hunting ground leases will be terminated
- Pheasant stocking on public hunting grounds will be reduced

Law Enforcement:

- Open warden positions will be left vacant
- Budgets for warden stations will be cut, affecting enforcement and response efforts
- No recruit class in 2003 or 2004

Facilities and Lands:

- Boundary posting and road maintenance on public lands will cease

Customer Service and Licensing:

- Service Center hours have been cut
- Customer service programs will be reduced
- Staffing levels in our Customer Service program will be cut 25% by June 2004

Administration:

- By seeking smaller, more frequent license fee increases and continuing to shave costs, the department's strategic and project planning window has shortened, making it more difficult for our programs to commit to long-term financial and cooperative projects with sports groups and other partners.
- Federal grants will be more difficult to match, affecting our ability to secure new funding sources when they become available.

The Fish and Wildlife Account is run on a cash basis, so we must keep our spending in line with available revenue. We are striving to maintain current programs and not start new ones. Since costs to run our current programs continue to rise, and because we must combat CWD, we'll need to make adjustments in our current programs while doing everything we can to maintain high quality hunting and fishing programs for you.



Fish

CHAPTER 1

Protecting, improving and managing Wisconsin's fisheries resources and aquatic habitats for the benefit of all the state's citizens.

Who pays for the fisheries program?

The Fish and Wildlife Account pays for \$24.7 million or 77% of the \$32.1 million fisheries management, research, and habitat protection programs and 271 of their 348 positions. The additional 77 positions and \$7.4 million are provided through general tax funds, federal funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, water regulation permits and other fees and federal grants.

Where does your Fish and Wildlife money go? (in millions of dollars)

Evaluate fish populations and conduct research	7.9
Rear and stock fish	5.7
Protect and improve habitat	3.7
Inform and educate the public	0.5
Develop rules and regulations	0.3
Pay program operations costs	6.6
Total	\$24.7

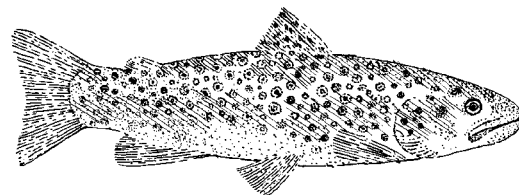
What has your money accomplished in 2002-2003?

Evaluate fish populations and conduct research: We sampled 527 stream sites and more than 276 lakes, rivers and flowages. We generated walleye population estimates on 29 lakes, and conducted creel surveys on 16 inland lakes and the Great Lakes. This work helps us assess stream and lake health, fish size and age distribution, stocking success and

regulatory effectiveness. We investigated human influences on fish communities and their habitat, including the effects of fish harvesting on the walleye population and the impacts of dams on fish movement in Wisconsin rivers.

Protect and improve habitat: We worked with over 10,000 landowners to review their waterfront and wetland projects to ensure these projects did not harm habitat and water quality. We improved habitat on 47 different trout streams and improved a total of 33.5 miles of trout streams.

Inform and educate the public: We trained 219 new volunteer school teachers, fishing club members, camp staff and youth mentors at 22 workshops, giving them resources to introduce 8,499 youngsters to fishing and aquatic resources in classroom or club settings. In addition, 11 Free Fishing Weekend events were held in state and local parks, attracting an estimated 900 participants.



Raise and stock fish: While it is important that fish populations are managed to encourage natural reproduction, stocking plays an important role in providing fish in some inland waters and maintaining our Great Lakes trout and salmon fisheries.

Major sport fish species stocked by the DNR

Species	Total Fish Stocked	Small Fingerling	Large Fingerling	Yearling	Adult (Broodstock)
Brook Trout	515,376	246,246	90,626	177,584	920
Brown Trout	3,112,086	1,160,275	971,584	977,043	3,184
Chinook Salmon	1,698,164	1,698,164	0	0	0
Coho Salmon	556,559	0	271,417	285,142	0
Hybrid	15,860	4,239	11,067	554	0
Lake Sturgeon	45,933	22,589	23,344	0	0
Lake Trout	304,149	114,000	125,975	64,174	0
Largemouth	160,832	81,025	79,807	0	0
Muskellunge	124,129	3,842	119,631	656	0
Northern Pike	86,444	49,682	36,762	0	0
Rainbow Trout	987,359	121,535	550,011	314,543	1,270
Smallmouth	9,674	0	9,674	0	0
Splake	143,114	0	143,114	0	0
Walleye	6,581,634	6,513,840	67,794	0	0
Statewide*	14,341,313	10,015,437	2,500,806	1,819,696	5,374

* Numbers do not include fry stocking or fry plant back (which is removing eggs, safely hatching them and returning fry to their original location).

Develop rules and regulations: We revise regulations to respond to changes in fish populations and feedback from the public. Changes were made to simplify and standardize regulations to make them more consistent for anglers while still protecting fish populations.

Pay program operation costs: We provide basic fisheries services to all 72 Wisconsin counties, Lakes Michigan and Superior, and the Mississippi River. This includes working with the public, sports groups, and lake property owners; investigating fish kills; conducting fishery surveys in response to public requests; purchasing new equipment and training staff. 95% of our fisheries management staff are stationed throughout the state.

Some program operation costs were also directed toward the Mississippi River- Lower St. Croix, which is a federal partnership that improves fish habitat on the Mississippi River.

Where are we going in 2003-04?

Evaluate fish populations and conduct research: We will continue assessing lake and stream health by monitoring fish communities and aquatic habitat. With budget cuts we will freeze 27 fisheries biologists and technician positions. We will conduct fewer fish surveys, and discontinue plans for a statewide musky research project.

Protect and improve habitat: We will continue improving trout habitat by working with landowners, farmers, angling groups and lake associations. However, with budget cuts it will be necessary to reduce habitat work.

Raise and stock fish: We have not increased the size of our fisheries program, but costs for fish food, rock used to rebuild fish habitat and transportation costs continue to rise. Renovation will continue on the Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery to correct serious water supply and infrastructure problems.

In 2003-04 we will shrink programs by \$1.3 million by reducing stocking of domestic trout in Class II and III streams, closing the Langlade hatchery and holding hatchery positions vacant.

How is fisheries work funded?

Funding Source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish and Wildlife Fund		
License Fees	16.1	50
Salmon Stamp	1.2	4
Trout Stamp	1.4	4
Sport Fish Restoration	4.8	15
Misc. grants and donations	1.2	4
Subtotal, Fish and Wildlife Fund	24.7	77
Rest of the Conservation Fund	2.1	7
General Taxes(GPR)	5.3	16
Total	32.1	100



Wildlife

CHAPTER 2

Preserving, promoting and managing Wisconsin's wildlife populations and their habitats and promoting wildlife enjoyment and appreciation to benefit current and future generations

Who pays for the wildlife program?

The Fish & Wildlife Account pays for \$28.3 million or 79% of the \$35.7 million wildlife program and 165 of its 227 positions. The additional 62 positions and \$7.4 million are provided through general tax funds, the Endangered Resources state income tax check-off and state vehicle license plate sales, federal and state grants and the rest of the Conservation Fund.

The final 2003-05 state budget added dollars for FY03 on a one-time basis for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) research and management.

Where does your Fish & Wildlife Money go? (in millions of dollars)

Conduct research and monitor diseases	11.8
Develop regulations, issue permits, reimburse farmers	5.7
Improve habitat and manage non-game species	3.4
Manage public lands	1.9
Stock game species	0.7
Inform and educate the public	1.5
Pay program operations costs	3.3
Total	\$28.3

What did your money accomplish in 2002-2003?

CWD: The 2002 discovery of chronic wasting disease in Wisconsin's deer herd set off a significant number of actions that ultimately resulted in over 40,000 white-tailed deer being tested statewide. Staff time and dollars were re-directed to collect tissue samples, use strategies to reduce the deer herd to prevent

the disease from spreading, conduct public outreach and education about CWD, and research deer ecology and hunter behavior to assess approaches for managing the disease.

CWD management and control is our top priority. As a result staff have reduced their efforts toward habitat development and maintenance, as well as wildlife area upkeep.

Develop regulations and issue permits:

We worked with citizens and conservation groups to set quotas, hunting rules and regulations. We responded to 4,572 complaints about nuisance wildlife and received 2,154 contacts to the Urban Wildlife Program. Wildlife Management issued 1,527 permits to raise, rehabilitate, stock and collect game species.



Blue Winged Teal

Improve habitat and manage wildlife species:

Our staff restored wetlands, maintained grasslands and forest openings, and built nests, dams, and other structures to create or enhance habitat on five million acres of publicly-owned land and about 13,105 acres of privately-owned land. Staff provided technical assistance enabling 1,932 landowners to improve habitat on their land.

Habitat Projects completed in 2002-2003 on public and private lands

Activities	Public Lands	Private Lands
Restored/established wetlands	62 wetlands on 442 acres	90 wetlands on 191 acres
Established/maintained forest openings	1,419 openings on 984 acres	—
Restored/established grasslands	2,201 acres	4,451 acres
Developed woodlands/brushlands	612 acres	—

Manage public lands: We improved access by leasing 68,629 acres as public hunting grounds and acquiring 4,122 acres for long-term wildlife management. Our wildlife staff manage about 500,000 acres of hunter-accessible public lands to provide suitable habitat for game species.

Stock game species: While we stress maintaining healthy, naturally-reproducing wildlife populations by enhancing habitat, stocking operations also are important for certain species. We raised and released 59,600 pheasants on 78 state properties and provided 53,500 day-old chicks to 58 conservation and hunting groups that raise and release the birds.

Reimburse farmers for wildlife damage: Issued 567 shooting permits and \$1.9 million in claims—a dollar from every license and all bonus permit sales revenue—to farmers for crops damaged by bear, deer, geese and turkeys in 2002. 4,846 deer were harvested on shooting permits.

Inform and educate the public: Our interpretive programs and outdoor skills classes reached more than 48,694 people ranging from toddlers to senior citizens. More than 230 disabled hunters participated in special hunts. We reached the broader public through media articles and interviews, and by answering questions at fairs, sports shows and Farm Progress Days.

Venison donations: Wisconsin hunters donated 6,771 deer to the 2003 Venison Donation Program, resulting in approximately 305,000 pounds of meat donated to needy families across Wisconsin.

Where are we going in 2003–2004?

Habitat Protection: We plan to continue work on habitat protection, using funds provided through the Stewardship Fund, North American Waterfowl Conservation Act, and other sources. Budget cuts have forced us to cut back virtually all of our habitat improvement programs, except those funded by special earmarked funds such as pheasant and waterfowl stamps. Stamp revenue that might have been used to develop new nesting areas is now being directed at basic maintenance work. We will stretch limited state dollars by seeking partners where possible to protect valuable habitat.

Bird Conservation: The DNR is partnering with over 100 conservation organizations, agencies and businesses in the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative to develop a comprehensive approach to bird conservation in Wisconsin. Identifying Wisconsin's Important Bird Areas (IBAs) is an important task this year, as is developing the framework for a comprehensive bird monitoring system. Whooping cranes and prairie chickens are two high-profile species needing attention that we will help support.

Customer Service: We will be working hard to help our customers become familiar with the wildlife rehabilitation and dog training rule revisions that will be implemented in 2004. Efforts to simplify some hunting regulations, such as deer tagging, also will be examined.

Wildlife research: Among a number of studies under way are an investigation of wild duck productivity on private wetlands and grasslands in southern Wisconsin where these habitats have been restored; and an evaluation of deer population monitoring by assessing sex-age-kill population estimates, harvest predictions and other deer population models.

CWD efforts: CWD will continue to be the primary focus for wildlife staff and resources. As new information becomes available, we will attempt to learn from it and adapt our approach accordingly. Sadly, in fall of 2003 we detected additional cases of CWD in Rock, Walworth and Kenosha counties. Our CWD control efforts must now address two areas of Wisconsin -- the original Mt. Horeb region in south central Wisconsin, and the new front in southeastern Wisconsin. In both situations, we will continue to try to limit the spread of this disease by reducing deer populations in the disease-infected areas.

How is wildlife work funded?

Funding Source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish & Wildlife Account		
License Fees	12.7	36
Turkey Stamp	.5	1
Pheasant Stamp	.4	1
Waterfowl Stamp	.6	2
Pittman Robertson Federal Aid	4.1	11
Wildlife damage surcharge	3.8	11
Misc. grants and donations	6.2	17
Subtotal, Fish & Wildlife Account	28.3	79
Rest of Conservation Fund	3.0	8
General Taxes (GPR)	3.8	11
Other Funds	.6	2
Total	35.7	100



LAW ENFORCEMENT

CHAPTER 3

Ensuring the right of all people to safely use, share and enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources through firm, fair and effective law enforcement, education, and partnerships with individuals and groups.

Who pays for the law enforcement program?

The Fish and Wildlife Account pays for \$17 million or 68% of the law enforcement program's \$25 million budget and 150 of its 232 positions. The additional 82 positions and \$8 million are provided through the Environmental Fund, Recycling Fund, boat, snowmobile and ATV registration fees, Federal grants, general tax funds and the rest of the Conservation Fund.

Where does your Fish and Wildlife money go? (in millions of dollars)

Enforce fishing hunting and trapping laws	13.2
Inform and educate the public	0.4
Provide hunter education	1.0
Manage car-killed deer disposal	0.3
Pay program operations costs	2.1
Total	\$17

What did your money accomplish in 2002-2003?

Enforce wildlife, fish and trapping laws:

Conservation wardens protect Wisconsin's natural resources and help ensure fair hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities. We check hunters, anglers and trappers for the required licenses, and ensure that people follow Wisconsin bag and season limits and laws governing methods of taking game. Wardens are responsible for reviewing applications and conducting inspections and audits in connection with special permits and licenses.

Thousands of citizen complaints about poaching and other violations of hunting and fishing regulations are investigated every year. Wardens also protect habitat and public health by enforcing environmental and recreational safety laws.

Wardens have been investigating the chronic wasting disease outbreak, preventing further potential outbreaks through deer farm audits and fencing inspections at all deer farms in the state, and removing escaped captive deer from the landscape. To date almost all of the state conservation wardens have been involved with these investigation and inspections.

"To all the wardens out there now, I say thanks for your hard work and dedication...Together we can pull through this rough stretch. Keep up the good work."

Due to budget cuts, no new recruit wardens were hired in 2003. This will have long-term impacts that we are still assessing. We hope to have a new class in 2005; until then we will continue our policy of re-certifying existing wardens in new laws, investigative techniques, firearms skills and competency. Warden supervisors coach and direct field wardens to ensure laws are enforced fairly and consistently across the state.

Inform and educate the public: Informing people about Wisconsin's fish and wildlife regulations is an important part of our duties. In addition to one on one contact, wardens present this information at schools, conservation, civic club and other group

meetings and work with radio, TV and newspapers. Often wardens have regular columns in local newspapers to share timely information about regulations. Wardens also worked at the State Fair, Ducks Unlimited Great Outdoors Festival and local county fairs. All of this helps wardens reach over several million people each year.

Provide hunter education: An important priority for our law enforcement program is to continue to promote responsible conduct by natural resource users.

Wisconsin's hunting accident rate has fallen 90% since our Hunter Safety program began in 1967. More than 818,000 students have graduated from Wisconsin's hunter education courses in the last 37 years. Wisconsin DNR boasts the largest instructor corps in North America (over 5,000 volunteers) that teach classes. Wardens assist in recruiting new instructors to coordinate the program, publicize safe hunting practices and make presentations during class time.

We have developed and implemented alternative ways to help people obtain hunter education certifications, such as using the Internet. While these delivery methods are useful, we do require that students completing a hunter education course this way complete one field day for training and evaluation so we can assess how prepared they are for using firearms while hunting. The hunter education program also provides access to shooting ranges through cooperative efforts with clubs.

In addition, a new CD-ROM snowmobile safety course was launched this year, offering snowmobile enthusiasts the opportunity to get certified in safety basics before getting on-trail experience.

Manage vehicle-killed deer disposal: In recent years, vehicle-deer crashes have killed more than 45,000 deer each year. We contract to have unclaimed deer hauled away from the roadside and disposed of. In 2002–03, we awarded contracts worth \$625,000—half of

which comes from general tax revenue—to dispose of deer in all 72 counties.

Pay program operation costs: Planning enforcement work, cooperating with other DNR programs, and paying for equipment, repairs, gas, insurance and salary adjustments are all vital to getting the job done. Without these basic services and tools, our wardens stationed statewide would not be able to do their jobs of protecting wildlife and habitat.

Where are we going in 2003–2004?

Enforce wildlife, fishing, trapping laws: 2004 is the 125th anniversary of the warden service. We are proud to have provided over a century's worth of protection to Wisconsin's natural resources and those who enjoy them. With only one or two field conservation wardens in most counties, our enforcement program will continue its focus on "community wardening," encouraging conservation wardens to become actively involved in local organizations and in building partnerships with citizens, public officials, media, legislators and private and public groups in their area. Wardens will continue to devote more effort to ensuring that commercialization of natural resources such as wild ginseng, turtles, clams, and inland and Great Lakes fish doesn't deplete those species. We will continue to make the best use of available technologies to help us perform our duties and serve the public as efficiently and quickly as possible.

Budget constraints are significantly reducing the response capacity of the warden service. Our operational budgets are currently 24% below 1995 levels without any adjustments for inflation. From a staffing standpoint, budget constraints and shortfalls did not allow new conservation wardens to be hired in 2003 or 2004. Consequently, we will be carrying 15 vacancies into 2004 and we will see up to 32 vacant law enforcement positions due to retirements by the end of 2005. We plan on hiring a limited number of new wardens in

January 2005 as the budget will allow. While this will continue to leave us 16 to 22 positions short of 2002 coverage, this will be a priority in order to ensure the safety and protection of Wisconsin's natural resources and the people who enjoy them.

In addition to fish and game funding sources, other funding sources provide for 93 other conservation wardens and staff who, in addition to fish and game duties, can devote time to habitat, environmental protection and recreational public safety duties that benefit all citizens and our natural resources.

How is law enforcement work funded?

Funding Source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish and Wildlife Fund		
License Fees	16.1	64
Federal Grants-Pittman Robertson Hunter Safety	0.9	4
Subtotal, Fish and Wildlife Fund	17.0	68
Rest of the Conservation Fund	3.9	15
General Taxes (GPR)	3.0	12
Environmental Fund	1.0	4
Recycling Fund	0.1	1
Total	25	100



Facilities AND Lands

CHAPTER 4

Buying, planning, and managing land, buildings, boat ramps, and other recreational facilities so all citizens can enjoy Wisconsin's beauty and outdoor recreation.

Who pays for the facilities and lands program?

The Fish & Wildlife Account pays for \$9.5 million or 16% of the \$61.5 million facilities and lands program and 65 of its 149 positions. The additional 84 positions and \$52 million are provided through general tax funds, the Environmental Fund, Recycling Fund, Petroleum Storage Cleanup Fund, Clean Water Fund and the rest of the Conservation Fund as well as the Stewardship Fund and Federal Grants.

Where does your Fish & Wildlife money go?

Acquire public land for hunting fishing and boating access sites

Plan for public use of lands and facilities

Manage and maintain DNR lands

Design and build recreational and public use facilities

What did your money accomplish in 2002–2003?

Acquire land: In 2002–03, we purchased 9,023 acres and secured easements on an additional 38,961 including a significant amount of Forest Legacy lands that will remain permanently open for hunting and fishing. We acquired public access to an additional 47,984 acres of land costing approximately \$23 million, bringing the department's ownership to over 1.4 million acres with 89 percent open for hunting and fishing.

Plan for public use of lands and facilities: We work with citizens to develop “master

plans” that identify activities allowed on certain properties -- from building roads and parking areas to managing wildlife habitat and timber—and what the land will look like 10, 20 and 30 years down the road.

In 2002–03, we completed studies to develop and expand the Brule River State Forest, Aztalan and Mirror Lake State Parks, and Dell Creek Fishery Area. We also continued master planning efforts for the Capitol Springs, Rib Mountain, Harrington Beach and Tommy G. Thompson State Parks, the Lower Wolf River Bottoms and the Northern Highlands/American Legion State Forest.



Manage and maintain department lands:

Ensuring that people have a safe, enjoyable experience on public conservation and recreation lands requires a lot of behind-the-scenes work. Tasks range from maintaining parking lots, roads, bridges, and campgrounds to sampling well water, managing portable-toilet contracts, assuring access to facilities for people with disabilities and enforcing regulations on properties.

We are responsible for developing basic management policies and procedures for all department properties, including the 948,000 acres that make up the state's wildlife and fishery areas. Our facilities and lands staff manages the land on 152 Fishery Areas, several major flowages and river ways, and hundreds of DNR-owned public boat access sites.

Design and build recreational facilities: People need roads, trails, parking, boat launches and restrooms to enjoy department-owned land. We work with other state agencies and with consultants and contractors to facilitate the design and construction of these structures. In 2002–03, we took 250 projects through the budget and design process and oversaw construction on a similar number of projects, including 39 boat access projects.

Where are we going in 2003-2004?

Significant reductions in the 2003-05 budget include \$2.5 million less in road and building development funds, the loss of 4 full time staff and over \$500,000 in operations funding. This means we will not complete or we will defer some road and building improvements and land maintenance. However “Stewardship 2000” remains fully funded and allows us to continue to acquire land and

make grants to local governments for conservation purposes.

Land acquisitions: Acquire 15,000-plus acres across the state, many within fishery or wildlife areas.

Construction projects: Complete work on approved 2003–2005 capital development budget projects.

Property planning: The Lower Wolf River Bottomlands master planning will be continued. We expect to complete master plans for Northern Highland/American Legion State Forest, Capitol Springs, Rib Mountain and Harrington Beach and Tommy G. Thompson State Parks. We will be continuing preparatory planning work for the Black River and Peshtigo River State Forests.

The Department will continue implementing the Stewardship 2000 program, which has \$60 million a year approved through the state budget process. This increased funding will help offset higher acquisition and development costs because of rising land prices. It will also ensure the department's ability to obtain and develop significant properties for public enjoyment and natural resource protection.

How is the facilities and lands program funded?

Funding Source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish & Wildlife Account	9.5	16
Rest of Conservation Fund	18.5	30
General Fund	31.3	51
Environmental Fund	1.2	2
Recycling Fund	0.2	<1
Petroleum Storage Cleanup Fund	0.5	1
Clean Water Fund	0.3	<1
Total	61.5	100



LICENSES

CHAPTER 5

Working to provide anglers and hunters with convenient ways to buy licenses, register their boats and get quick, consistent answers to their questions about regulations, licenses and natural resources.

Who pays for the license program?

The Fish & Wildlife Account pays for 56% of the \$11.9 million license program and 70 of its 142 positions. The additional 72 positions and \$5.2 million are provided through general tax funds, the environmental fund, and the boat, all-terrain vehicle and snowmobile accounts of the Conservation Fund.

Where does your Fish & Wildlife money go?

- Sell hunting, fishing, trapping licenses
- Issue special wildlife harvest permits
- Issue commercial farm and occupational licenses
- Educate customers and license agents
- Pay program operations costs

What did your money accomplish in 2002-2003?

Sell hunting, fishing, trapping and other licenses: Through the use of an Automated License Issuance System (ALIS), the DNR issues licenses, permits and stamps for hunting, fishing and trapping.

This system enables customers to purchase their licenses over the counter from approximately 1,500 license agents located in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois and Iowa as well as from the DNR's 31 Service Centers. Customers have the option of purchasing their licenses by phone or over the Internet.

DNR's Hunting & Fishing License Internet Sales site allows the customer to print many different types of licenses on their home printers. (Licenses that require a back tag and/or carcass tag may be purchased online

but will be delivered to the customer by mail). Customer response to the Internet sales site continues to increase and it is becoming a very popular method of purchasing licenses.

The department is able to access vital marketing information using its customer database and to track sales trends and statistics. The automated system also promptly deposits revenue from the sale of licenses through an electronic transfer of funds. Another service we have been able to provide hunters is the opportunity to register their recreational vehicles online 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"...I have seldom had the pleasure of dealing with people of your caliber, professional and friendly. Not only do you know your job intimately, but you also have the people skills which make people dealing with you feel that the customer comes first."

Issue special wildlife harvest permits: DNR administers nine hunting and/or trapping permit programs. Through an application and drawing process, customers are required to obtain permits, in addition to hunting or trapping licenses and stamps, to pursue antlerless deer, turkey, bear, goose, sharp-tailed grouse, bobcat, otter and fisher. Customers can choose to submit their permit application choices over the Internet or by mail.

Over 20% of applicants used the online application service. Customers can now visit DNR's Web site to determine whether they

were awarded a permit and check their ongoing preference status for each drawing.

Number of licensed hunters and anglers (depicts growth and seasonal fluctuations)

FY	Hunters	Anglers	Total
1999–00	769,420	1,374,185	2,143,605
2000–01	773,239	1,393,630	2,166,869
2001–02	763,063	1,430,714	2,193,777
2002-03	689,099	1,394,630	2,083,729

Issue commercial farm and occupational licenses: We issue various captive wildlife licenses and occupational/business licenses, including guide, taxidermist, bait dealer, fur dealer and wholesale fish dealer licenses.

Educate customers and license agents: The licensing database provides our staff with up-to-date information, enabling staff to assist both internal and external customers. We maintain information on DNR's Web site and develop handouts and brochures that educate customers. Our staff is responsible for distributing millions of regulation pamphlets, maps and other informational brochures to both license agents and our customers.

Pay program operation costs: Planning licensing work, securing technical services, cooperating with other DNR programs, paying for equipment and repairs and covering insurance and salaries are all vital to getting the job done.

How is the license program funded?

Funding Source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish & Wildlife Account	6.7	56
Rest of Conservation Fund	4.2	35
General Fund	0.9	8
Environmental Fund	0.1	1
Total	11.9	100

Where are we going in 2003–2004?

Introduce improvements to licensing system: In March 2004, the Department will introduce the next generation of its automated license issuance system, with benefits to hunters, anglers and license agents. The 2004 licenses will have a new look. Back tags and license documents have been redesigned to prominently display the license year, allowing DNR to continue using the same paper year-after-year and reducing license paper costs.

Use technology to improve customer service: We have been forced to cut staff and reduce hours at service centers. Internet technology can be a cost-effective way to deliver customer services. Response has been excellent to online license sales and applications for special permits. We will continue to explore opportunities to provide services to our customers via the Internet.

Issue special wildlife harvest permits: We will look for ways to streamline the permit issuance process. One example will be to use the automated license system to issue spring turkey permits, eliminating the need to send permits through the mail.

Educate customers and license agents: We will continue to partner with representatives of agents and collect feedback from customers to identify and improve tools used to share information with customers and license agents.



REGIONAL MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 6

Providing leadership and direction to Land, Enforcement, Water and other staff in regions and local geographic areas

Who pays for regional management?

The Fish & Wildlife Account pays for about 27% or \$1.4 million of the \$5.1 million regional management program and 19 of its 60 positions. The additional 41 positions and \$3.7 million are provided through general purpose tax revenue, environmental funds, and the rest of the Conservation Fund.

Figures have changed significantly from the previous fiscal year because of reorganization; regional managers who previously were covered by regional management budgets are now covered under bureau and division budgets.

Where does your Fish & Wildlife money go?

Maintain contact with local government, conservation groups and citizens on fish and wildlife issues

Direct department field staff and the work they do in local geographic areas

Develop and lead citizen partnership teams in local geographic areas

Oversee consistency of decisions and policies across regions

What did your money accomplish in 2002–2003?

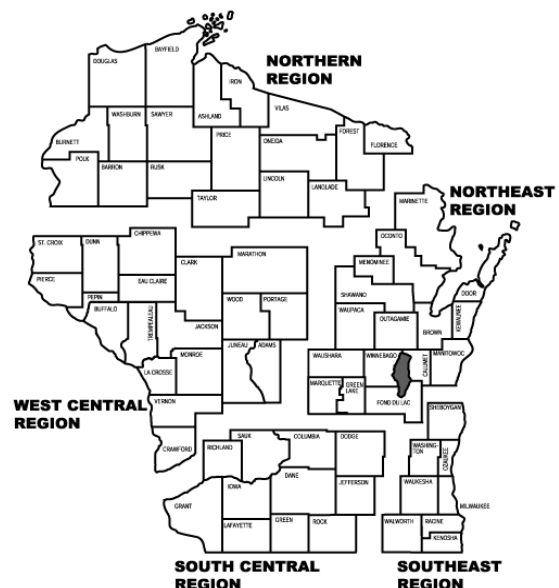
Maintain contact with citizens on fish and wildlife issues: Our field managers continue to work on numerous projects with a wide range of partners that include local conservation clubs, civic organizations, nonprofit groups, government agencies, and statewide or national organizations.

Contact with hunters, anglers and other citizens, gathering input on decisions,

clarifying department policies and initiatives and answering citizens' questions remain high priorities.

Direct field staff and the work they do:

Our managers provide leadership and direction to all DNR field staff—including those in fish, wildlife and enforcement—as these employees make daily decisions affecting natural resources in local geographic areas.



Develop and lead local partnerships: The DNR supports local partnerships that pull together people and organizations interested in natural resources. Many partnerships work to restore habitats, manage local natural

resources and collect essential data for planning. Some work to influence natural resource policies.

Oversee consistency of decisions and policies across Regions: Field managers work to build consistency in policy and practice across regional boundaries, working for the equitable treatment of all Wisconsin's citizens.

Where are we going in 2003–2004?

Direct field staff and the work they do: Because of state budget concerns, our work planning and strategic planning initiatives will take on shorter life cycles. We will do this

How is regional management funded?

Funding source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish & Wildlife Account	1.4	27
Rest of Conservation Fund	0.8	16
General Fund	2.8	55
Environmental Fund	0.1	2
Total	5.1	100

while keeping in mind long-term conservation goals.

Continue building partnerships in local geographic areas: Efforts will continue to refine and improve partnerships, share information and decision making with partners, and move forward with implementing the recommendations of these teams.

Manage for consistent application of policy across programs and the state: Continue to improve communication across programs and regions to improve consistent policy application.



Administration

CHAPTER 7

The business function of the department provides direction and support that helps the rest of the department's programs function

Who pays for administration?

The Fish & Wildlife Account pays for 21% or \$7.8 million of the \$36.3 million department administration budget and 97 of its 371 positions. The additional 274 positions and \$28.5 million are provided through general purpose tax revenue, the Environmental Fund, the Clean Water Fund, the Recycling Fund, the Petroleum Storage Cleanup Fund, the Dry Cleaner Fund, and the rest of the Conservation Fund.

Where does your Fish & Wildlife money go?

Meet with fishing and hunting organizations, government agencies, legislators and the public

Provide legal services

Administer programs funded by fish and wildlife account

Manage collective bargaining, recruiting and hiring

Provide computer support and develop government applications

Pay bills and manage payroll, benefits and financial records

Communicate with the public and involve citizens in decisions

Manage and distribute grants

Provide mail services and distribute publications

What did your money accomplish in 2002-2003?

Meet with fishing and hunting organizations, government agencies, legislators and the public: Significant amounts of time were spent this year meeting

with partners concerned about budget implications on Wisconsin's natural resources.

For the first time in seven years we requested a fee increase, and had a broad base of support from hunting, fishing and conservation groups from across the state. While some fee increases were granted by the legislature, others were not. The department greatly appreciates the high degree of support the fee increase received from conservation groups, other partners and individuals.

Future of hunting, fishing and trapping:

The department continued work outlined in the Future of Hunting, Fishing and Trapping 2020 Plan.

Examples of work done include having over 550 people participate in 30 "Learn to Hunt" programs and 95 angler education programs and clinics, with over 5144 youths participating. In addition, three Wisconsin angler education instructors received \$5,000 Physical Education grants to implement or enhance fishing in their school curricula.

Provide legal services: Our legal services staff draft administrative rules and statutory language; develop contracts for land purchases, animal damage and land rights; interpret laws and represent fish and wildlife programs in a variety of legal actions.

Administer programs funded by Fish & Wildlife Account: At the end of June 2003 our administrative departments had lost 65 positions, with another 120 positions targeted for cuts by the end of June 2004. The departments that support conservation work

by managing grants, information technology, human resources, finance and education will have been cut by 25%.

Manage our workforce: 837 of the 2,800+ employees who work for the DNR are funded by Fish & Wildlife dollars. With layoffs and many retirements expected through the next decade, we are assessing the impact of losing valuable expertise from a seasoned workforce.

We have a strong commitment to our staff, who work diligently to protect Wisconsin's hunting and fishing heritage. One of the ways we are doing this is through a Leadership Development program that prepares current employees to become leaders in carrying out the Department's mission in the future.

Provide support for technology that continues to play an important role: Recommend standards for computer equipment and programming that help staff manage species and habitat, provide efficient enforcement of laws and move us toward e-government where information, licenses and other services are readily available to citizens online.

The DNR Web site is being redesigned based on valuable customer feedback. The Web site already has a new address of dnr.wi.gov.

Pay bills and manage payroll, benefits and financial records: Maintaining good financial records, managing efficient financial processes and systems, paying bills and providing payroll and benefits to our employees are vital to our organization. With current budget conditions, continued administrative efficiency remains more important than ever.

Communicate with media, citizens and teachers and involve citizens in decisions: Our weekly news packet, including several special editions on chronic wasting disease, deer-hunting and fishing, was sent to

1,000 media outlets that published or broadcast stories reaching citizens statewide.

Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine, now in its 27th year of publishing, has a circulation of 123,000. Its Web site, www.wnrmag.com has links to every story included in the magazine since 1995. The site receives about 700,000 visits a year, and is popular for browsing and research. The magazine also sends out monthly electronic newsletters to interested subscribers sharing interesting and timely information.

Environmental Education for Kids (EEK!) our award-winning online magazine for kids, reaches thousands of children in school and at home each month. It was recently chosen as a Great Web Site for Kids by the American Library Association, and site visits to EEK! have reached well over a million a year.

"Dear DNR for kids:

...I'm 10 years old and I have been researching on the prairie for my biome. Me and my 4th-grade class have been using EEK for kids and it has not been hard for us to research at all. EEK for kids is so nice and laid out that I just think this is the best website ever."

Our Emmy-award-winning TV program for kids, Into the Outdoors, began its fourth year of broadcast on commercial TV stations in Wisconsin and neighboring states.

Manage and distribute grants: Local government and nonprofit groups, clubs and individual citizens play important roles in protecting and enhancing Wisconsin's environment and providing recreational opportunities. We manage and distribute Fish & Wildlife Account funds as grants to help others improve habitat, acquire land and protect stream banks.

Provide mail services and distribute publications: Our mail and publications staff make sure our customers get the publications they request. We also are

responsible for delivering mail to the DNR's central office in Madison, our 31 service centers and other state and federal agencies. In 2003 we distributed about 3.4 million fishing, deer hunting, small game hunting, trapping, boating, snowmobile, ATV and

various other regulation pamphlets plus 4.4 million publications and forms. We also sent class materials for about 68,000 students in hunter, boating, ATV and snowmobile law enforcement safety programs.

How is Administration funded?

Funding source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish & Wildlife Account	7.8	21
Rest of Conservation Fund	11.8	32
General Fund	13.0	36
Environmental Fund	1.4	4
Recycling Fund	0.3	1
Petroleum Storage Cleanup Fund	0.2	1
Clean Water Fund	1.7	5
Dry Cleaner Fund	0.1	<1
Total	36.3	100

OUR MISSION:

To protect and enhance our natural resources:
our air, land and water;
our wildlife, fish and forests
and the ecosystems that sustain all life.

To provide a healthy, sustainable environment
and a full range of outdoor opportunities.

To ensure the right of all people
to use and enjoy these resources
in their work and leisure.

To work with people
to understand each other's views
and to carry out the public will.

And in this partnership
consider the future and generations to follow.

Wisconsin's Fish AND Wildlife ANNUAL REPORT

If you have suggestions or comments about this publication, please send them to

CE/6

Fish and Wildlife Report

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 7921

Madison, WI 53707-79

Or use the online form which will be forwarded to a DNR Communication and Education staff person.

dnr.wi.gov

Related Links

Fish	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/fish/
Wisconsin's Fishing Seasons	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/fish/seasons/
Wisconsin Lakes with DNR Lake maps by County	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/lakes/lakemap/
Wildlife	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/
Hunting and Trapping Season Dates	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/hunt/seasdate.htm
Wisconsin DNR's Public Wildlife Recreation lands/Public Hunting Areas	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/reclands/
Hunting In Wisconsin	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/HUNT/index.htm
Hunting Regulations	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/regs/
Law Enforcement	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/
Hunter Safety Education	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/safety/hunted.htm
News and Outdoor Report	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/news/on/index.htm
Outdoor Season Calendar; Upcoming season dates and deadlines	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/news/calendar.html
Online Conservation licensing center	http://www.wildlifelicense.com/wi/
Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine	http://www.wnrmag.com/
Environmental Education for Kids	http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/eeek/